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NOTES AND QUERIES.

SACRIFICE AMONG THE WAKAMBA IN BRITISH EAST AFRICA.—In the summer of 1896 a mission station was established among the Wakamba in British East Africa.¹ The facts stated below are derived from letters from Mr. Willis R. Hotchkiss, a missionary connected with the station, and from Mr. Charles E. Hulburt, of Coatesville, Pa., the American director of the work, who has just returned from a trip to the mission field.

The Wakamba live in a mountainous country, about 325 miles from the coast, but still about the same distance eastward from Victoria Nyanza. They occupy a lofty valley, the elevation of which is about 5000 feet above the sea. The portion of this valley where the mission is located is about 15 miles south of the equator. Northward 90 miles rises Mount Kenia, 18,000 feet high, while about the same distance to the south is Kilmia Njaro, 19,000 feet high, — both snow-capped the year round. The nearest town, which consists of a fort and a few houses, is Machakos, on the line of the Uganda Railway, which is being built from Mombasa to Lake Victoria.

The Wakamba belong to what is known as the Bantu family of Africans, who are superior to the purely negro races. Keane describes the Bantu as of "lighter color, larger cranial capacity, smaller teeth, and less pronounced prognathism," than the negroes. "They are," he says, "distinctly more intelligent, more civilized, and more capable of upward development than the full-blood negro."²

Mr. Hulburt says³ of the Wakamba that they raise their own millet, corn, and beans, on which they live almost exclusively. They get their meat from the various members of the antelope family, which abound in vast numbers in the plains, together with the zebra, which may be found in droves of thousands, and of which the natives are very fond. They keep cattle, goats, and the African hairy sheep. They have no towns, as the people do not congregate, save as they live along the hillsides or valleys. The only commerce or exchange known among them, Mr. Hulburt declares to be the exchange of their daughters for a certain number of goats. The men are almost universally nude, while the women wear a curious apron made of skins, and sometimes worked with beads.

When the mission was established, the language of the Wakamba had never been studied by the outside world. It was necessary for the missionaries to learn it by actual contact, without grammars or other helps. The information which Mr. Hotchkiss gives of their form of sacrifice is therefore quite new.

Writing under date of January 15, 1899, he says that, while they believe in a God, most of their religious exercises are devoted to the propitiation of evil spirits. They make offerings of goats, and, at certain seasons, of the

¹ This mission is independent and self-governing. It is represented in this country by the Philadelphia Missionary Council.

² *Ethnology*, p. 271.

³ In a letter to the writer.

produce of their fields, but all this is, he says, offered to Aimu, the chief of the evil spirits.

The blood is poured out as a propitiation to the demon, while the flesh furnishes a feast for the old men. While this feast is going on, the women engage in an indecent dance, which is continued until many go into convulsions, and have to be carried away.

There are several features in this sacrifice which furnish parallels to Semitic sacrifices. 1. The propitiation of the demon Aimu with the blood of a goat, although it is accomplished in a different way, reminds one of the goat with which Azazel was propitiated in the ritual of the Day of Atonement in Leviticus xvi. 2. The festal character of the sacrifice is parallel to the festal character of all ancient Semitic sacrifice, as W. R. Smith has shown us in the "Religion of the Semites." 3. That the old Semitic sacrificial feasts were accompanied with dancing, which were in the early times religious, but which tended to assume an orgiastic character, and become a sort of intoxication of the senses, Smith has also shown. (*Op. cit.* 260-262, and 430-433.)

Such rites in some form are, it would seem, characteristic of most religions at an early stage of development.¹

George A. Barton.

BRYN MAWR, P.A.

Two NEGRO WITCH-STORIES.—I. The following story of witchcraft was told by a mulatto or quadroon stewardess of Baltimore, on a steamer sailing from Boston to Baltimore. The stewardess had learned the particulars of her mother, who, with the mother's half-brother, the hero of the story, lived in Salisbury, Md.

Every night a black cat came and rode on the man's chest. He was told that it was not really a cat but a witch, and was advised to set a trap for it in the usual way, that is, by thrusting a fork through a sieve, so that the tines would project inside of it.

This he did, placing the sieve close beside him. The cat, in attempting to leap on his chest as usual, was impaled on the fork, and unable to get off.

Next morning it was found that the next-door neighbor, a woman, was sick abed with a "misery in her breast," the location of the pain corresponding exactly to the wounded place on the chest of the cat. This neighbor died of the injury within a week.

II. The same woman related the following: Her mother, when a girl, lived in Salisbury, Md., in service with two reputable and well-to-do old maiden ladies. She noticed that one of these old ladies was frequently in the habit of going out at 10 P. M. or later, and remaining out very late,—perhaps all night. She told her mother of this, saying she thought there was something queer about the old ladies, and the mother suggested that possibly they were witches.

One night the old ladies asked the colored girl to have her mother come

¹ Cf. Brinton, *Religions of Primitive Peoples*, pp. 180-182.